



Success News

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MARTA'S DESSERTS Cooking Stirs Up a Profit

Austin, TX - Working has all ways been a part of Marta Guzman's life. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, she started helping out in the family toy wholesale business when she was eight years old. By the time she was fifteen years old, her father placed her in charge of bookkeeping and taking orders from their larger business customers.

Having moved to Austin to pursue her education at The University of Texas, Marta and her husband started a toy business, Austin Toy House. The business felt the economic downfall of 1986. Before long, they sold what remained of their business and both Marta and Carlos began seeking a second source of income.

Marta, being the entrepreneur, remembered she had a treasured wedding gift – an original classic vanilla flan dessert used by her mother. In 1989, Marta began her home-based dessert business with \$150.00. She soon grew into her neighbor's kitchen.

The young entrepreneur sought the assistance of the Texas State University-Small Business Development Center. With the SBDC's counseling and guidance, Marta moved her flan business from her home to Orchard Street. She experienced many

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obstacles a food service business normally encounters, undaunted, Marta overcame most of those obstacles, with one exception, finding a way to increase the shelf-life of the flan. While researching this obstacle, she continued to produce locally. In 1994 Marta's classic vanilla flan won the Austin Chronicle's "Best Flan" award and in 1995 and 1996, her pumpkin flan won the Austin Chronicle's "Best Flan" award. During this time, she found a way to increase the shelf-life of her flan, and she immediately began to sell to her first food service distributor.

In 2000, International Delights changed its name to Marta's Desserts. In 2001, due to unprecedented growth, Marta's Desserts moved to a bigger facility and encountered new problems: a sluggish economy and a new packaging container that caused the flan to break. Aggressive dessert competition began to move in, but Marta met the problems head on.

The SBDC has been a guiding force for Marta's Desserts. They have provided her with the counseling, evaluation, research, and guidance to assist it through difficult times. With the SBDC's guidance, the company is now prepared to again increase its operations and sales. The SBDC is currently assisting Marta's Desserts in preparing to enter the "prepared foods" market. It is doing so by studying the "prepared foods" market and developing an aggressive marketing plan for her.

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